

schools where we are giving vocational training and we are also paying stipends to the parents of the child. It is about Rs. 100 per month. After vocational training, the child has to find a way out.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: Where are the vocational schools? There is no vocational training school being set up. That is a different question.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: We have about 1,800 schools in the country.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: That is different. But he asked a different question.

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: There are 1,800 schools and in these schools, the children who have been taken out from the hazardous industries are being given midday meal, vocational training and special training.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : After schooling, what will they do?

SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM: After schooling, I have said that they have to find out their own means (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : It is stated that many schools have been opened. Please provide the details of amount of money provided to each school (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Last week, there was a question about this. All the information was already furnished. I remember it.

[Translation]

Pay Scale to MTNL Employees

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*262. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :
DR. BALIRAM :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited have not been given the pay scale as per rules prevalent in the Nigam even after a period of ten years of its inception;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor along with the number of such employees;

(c) whether any committee has been constituted by the Government to provide pay-scale as per the rules of the Nigam;

(d) if so, the salient features and composition thereof;

(e) the number of meetings held by the committee during the last two years and the decision taken in these meetings; and

(f) the time by which the committee is likely to submit its final report?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) MTNL Employees consist of following two categories:

(i) Directly recruited 62 employees;

(ii) The Government employees on deemed deputation, approximately 62,500.

Out of directly recruited employees of MTNL, 48 employees have already been given the industrial DA pay scales. The pay scales of remaining 14 employees who are in executive category is under consideration of the Management:

The Government employees who are on deemed deputation are drawing Government pay scales because the case of their absorption in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited has not been yet decided.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) to (f) Question does not arise in view of (c) above.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Mr Speaker Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that 62 employees have been recruited directly. Out of them 48 employees have already been given industrial DA pay scales. I would like to know the category of these employees and the time since when they are being paid dearness allowance. Whether the Government is contemplating to give industrial DA pay scales to remaining 14 employees? For how many years, they have been working in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd.?

[English]

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : The entire issue is *sub judice*. This Staff Union of the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited have gone before the Central Administrative

Tribunal. I would request the hon. Member to have some patience. The hearing on this matter would be held on 14th March, 1997. So, whatever reply that has to be given would be available as soon as this issue is decided.

MR. SPEAKER : The hearing is tomorrow.

[Translation]

SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, some employees have joined Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. on deputation. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether these employees are also being considered for inclusion in this category? If so, the time by which a decision is likely to be taken in this regard and the reasons therefor? Will this decision not cause loss to the employees of the Nigam?

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : Mr. Speaker, Sir, those employees have moved the court. This matter will come up before Central Administrative Tribunal on 18th June this year.

[English]

I would request the hon. Member to be patient till this issue is decided. But then I would also inform the House that this entire issue has become a very complicated issue now, because the telecommunication services in India have undergone a rapid change.

We are modernising. Our services are being opened for foreign companies. Investments are coming in. Basic telephone services have already been put up for offers from different investors and a new look is required to be taken at the entire structure of the Department of Telecommunication.

[Translation]

DR. BALIRAM : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thought you would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister that M.T.N.L. was set up in 1986 and it was initially set up for five years, but today it is going to complete about 12 years. The Hon'ble Minister has stated in his reply that there are two categories but the nature of work is same. For example, some stenographers are working in corporate whereas others are working in M.T.N.L. Those working M.T.N.L. draw a salary of Rs 3823/- whereas others working in corporate draw a salary of Rs. 5171/- So there is such discrimination despite same nature of work. Why is this discrimination? Whether the Hon'ble Minister is going to make such arrangement so that both categories of employees get same salary? If so the time by which such a decision is likely to be taken?

SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP : I have already given a reply in this regard. The Government has no intention to create such kind of discrimination between two categories of employees. We are for rationalisation of pay structure of M.T.N.L. employees and directly appointed employees. In

this connection, petitions have been filed in CAT. These petitions will be heard on 14th March and 18th June. I had even stated that there was need of thinking by our Department the other way in this regard. There have been a lot of improvement in our services.

[English]

A total opening has taken place and probably in a years time, the entire structure of the Department of Telecommunication will have to undergo a change.

World Trade Organisation

*263. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned " 68 nations sign multibillion Telecom pact" appearing in the *Times of India* dated February 17, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether India has signed this pact;

(d) if so, the profits/gains likely to be accrued to the country; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) That discussions for opening up of basic telecommunication service market which were continuing since April, 1994 were concluded on 15.02.1997. A total of 54 members consisting of 68 countries submitted their schedules to WTO containing various subsectors of basic telecommunication services which they will open to competition with limitations to market access. India also submitted its schedule of commitments on basic telecommunication services. The agreement shall come into force w.e.f. 1st January, 1998.

(d) and (e) The deal, apart from attracting foreign investment in telecom sector, would phase out monopolies and restraints on competition, to the extent committed by India. This will ultimately result in improvement of telecommunication services in the country.

In future, Indian telecommunication service providers can also explore foreign markets for providing these services.

SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether Government is planning to have a common programme with other countries which might be affected by the US move to drastically reduce international